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**THE AGRICULTURAL UNIONIST**

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### Schenley Strike Ends With Union Victory

The strike of farm workers on the 5,000 acre grape ranch owned by Schenley Distillers near Delano, California ended June 2, the National Agricultural Workers Union AFL announced in Washington. An agreement made by the Schenley Co. and the Union provides for the re-employment of all workers locked out by the company since March 15, as a result of union activity. Wage increases were won with a 5 c. an hour across the board increase granted and an adjustment of rate for various classifications going into effect June 15th. A grievance procedure has also been set by the company and the Union for resolving any future controversy. The strike of farm workers on the Schenley Ranch was the object of much concern by organized labor generally, since over 90 AFL unions have contracts with the Schenley Corp. and the company advertizes its products as union made.

### New Mexican Agreement Slight Improvement

The new agreement between the United States and Mexico providing for importation of Mexican Nationals for farm work in the United States, signed in Washington June 12, represents but slight improvement over the one in effect during 1951. H. L. Mitchell, president of the National Agricultural Workers Union AFL, stated.

Mitchell said much would depend on the administration of the terms of the new agreement by the U. S. Department of Labor. The only fundamental change in the new agreement over that in effect during 1951 is that the Mexican National imported for farm work now has the right to elect his own representatives to maintain the contract between him and the American employer. If the language means what it says, the Mexican National can designate an American union as his representative.

There is no minimum wage set in the new agreement. The question of strikes and lockouts involving Mexican Nationals remains vague and indefinite, and if the Secretary of Labor does not clarify the article, the Mexicans may continue to be used by employers as strike breakers.



### LOUISIANA MEMBERS PICKET COMPANY FOR FAILURE TO OBSERVE UNION CONTRACT TERMS

Picket lines, suits for damages, court injunctions, newspaper charges and counter charges came fast and furious last month when the Henry Wall Produce Company of Springfield, Louisiana decided that its union contract with the Fruit and Vegetable Producers Local No. 312, of the National Agricultural Workers Union did not mean what it said.

In a demonstration of solidarity seldom equalled in an industrial dispute and never carried out in a rural area in the United States before, the 3,400 members of the Local Union were mobilized to enforce the terms of a union contract. Nearly all of the members of the union took a turn on the peaceful picket line surrounding Henry Wall's Produce House. So effective was the union picket line that very few crates of vegetables got through. Produce trucks turned away empty when they met the determined farmers, marshalled before the company headquarters. Wall then sought a court injunction, charging union members with being imported thugs and gangsters seeking to interfere with his business. The hearing on the injunction application was delayed when the would-be enjoiners of peaceful picketing couldn't find evidence to support their wild charges in court. State police were imported from Baton Rouge to help break the strike, but hurriedly recalled when a newly elected Governor realized that he was about to ruin his chances for future election to public office by interfering with the legal rights of a large number of voters who never fail to use their ballots at election time.

#### Newspaper Tries Strike Breaking

On the whole, the newspaper accounts were fair to the union but as is usual in cases involving organized labor, at least one newspaper can be found to prostitute the freedom of press. In this instance it was a little weekly sheet published in the town of Denham Springs, in which lurid headlines declared, "Mob Violence Flares in Parish", charging that the life of Henry Wall was endangered by "strong arm men, mobsters and gangsters." This type of yellow dog journalism is designed to stir up violence in labor disputes. It only succeeded in strengthening the union, all of whose members are self-respecting law abiding people and leading citizens of their respective communities.

#### Union Men Arrested On Silly Charges

Local police were pressured into arresting a number of pickets for minor traffic violations. Hank Hasiwar, Vice President of the National Union who was in the area, was accused of blocking traffic, for parking his car on the road side. Louis Edwards, Castle Jones, and Richard Howes were also arrested and held for questioning by the town marshal of Ponchatoula. Henry Walls had claimed that one of his trucks had been stopped and the driver "threatened." There were other claims made with no factual basis, that someone threw rocks at a truck. State police were driving all over three parishes chasing down unfounded rumors, until the Governor decided it was not good politics to have the highway patrol interfering with his farm constituents.

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### Union Wins Round 2 California Imperial

An order by Secretary of Labor, Maurice J. Tobin, and its prompt enforcement in the Imperial Valley of California, stopped a strike by nearly 3,000 American farm workers early in June.

The melon pickers, nearly all of whom are Spanish-speaking members of the National Agricultural Workers Union, were all set to walk out and begin picketing the fields when the Secretary of Labor issued his order requiring growers hiring Mexican Nationals to give preference on all farm jobs to domestic farm workers, even if it means transferring such Mexicans Nationals to other employment or returning them to Mexico. This order applies in every area where Mexican Nationals are employed. If there is an American worker out of a job, the local office of the State Employment Service is now required to provide the American worker with a job at an equal rate of pay given the Mexican. If a Mexican has a better paying job or a job requiring skill possessed by an American, then the American must be given the job, or one just as good.

#### Wetback Employer Penalized

Joe Maggio a large farm operator in the Imperial Valley, who was hiring Mexican Nationals was found to be also employing illegal aliens and his contract to import or hire Mexican Nationals legally was canceled at the same time. The Union had reported to the Department of Labor that Maggio had been caught by the U. S. Border Patrol with 392 wetbacks on his farm. Since Maggio had been found hiring wetbacks prior to this, it was a clear violation of the law. When the nationals and wetbacks were removed from the Maggio Ranch, the Imperial Valley Farm Labor Council composed of the NAWU Locals promptly offered to supply needed labor to harvest the melon crop.

#### Union Men Pick Crop

##### At Union Wage

Nearly 100 Union members went to work on the Maggio Ranch picking melons at 25 c. a box or \$25 a truck load. This rate is 5 c. a box and \$5 a truck load higher than was paid in 1951, when the Union went on strike and the Mex-

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**La. Members Picket**

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**Lawsuits and Injunctions**

Unable to get his injunction against the alleged strong armed mobs of gangsters, Wall filed a suit for damages against the Local Union. He claimed he had lost \$89,000 worth of business as the result of the strike. The union filed a counter suit for \$39,000 against Wall for violating his contract.

**Union Members and Handlers Reap High Prices**

While all the hullabaloo was going on at Springfield, the Union farmers, including those near the town of Springfield, were harvesting their crops and all other handlers were busy shipping fresh vegetables to market. The Union contract was proving itself to be the best thing for both producers and handlers ever to hit the Louisiana fruit and vegetable fields. By orderly marketing the vegetable crop and selling on the free auction, farmers through their union were reaping the highest prices paid in years.

**Ladies Day On The Picket Line**

Nearly every farmer who belonged to the union had a chance to take his turn on the picket line. Not only were the men on the picket line but one day was set aside as "Ladies Da," when wives and daughters of the union members took over the picketing by themselves. Wall and his cohorts were made to look very foolish when the farm women appeared. It is not known whether the Denham Springs News charged that the ladies were outside agitators, strong armed mobsters or gangsters. Maybe the editor wrote such an article but he didn't dare publish anything so ridiculous.

**Now Henry Is On the Wall**

Now that the crops are all in, the injunction is "Moot," as the lawyers say. The lawsuits are hanging on and will no doubt be settled in due time by the courts. Only Mr. Henry Wall is the loser, having lost a whole season's business by violating his contract with the union. He was one of the 38 handlers who reaped the full benefits of the union contract during the strawberry season, only to lose out on the vegetable crops. Some one may have benefitted by his fight against the union, but it certainly was not Henry Wall. It is quite likely that if Henry doesn't change his mind next season, Henry will be up against the wall, financially.

**Union Marketing of Strawberries Great Success in 1952**

The Louisiana Fruit and Vegetable Producers Union Local No. 312, National Agricultural Workers Union A. F. of L., has released final figures on the prices received by its members in 1952 as contrasted with those received in 1951, when there was no union program.

The figures are taken from official auction records at Hammond, La. The auction is operated under the supervision of the Department of Agriculture. The day by day record of strawberry prices (24 pint crate) on the Hammond Auction is given below:

1952		1951	
Mar 21	\$7.75	Mar 22	\$5.50
" 22	7.75	" 23	5.75
" 24	8.25	" 24	5.75
" 25	8.00	" 26	6.43
" 27	8.25	" 27	6.00
" 28	8.50	" 28	5.50
" 29	9.11	" 29	5.50
" 31	8.65	" 30	6.00
Apr 1	7.69	" 31	6.00
" 2	8.10	Apr 1	6.00
" 3	9.25	" 2	7.27½
" 4	8.35	" 3	7.25
" 5	8.68	" 4	7.25
" 6	8.35	" 5	7.75
" 8	8.33	" 6	7.75
" 9	7.50	" 7	7.75
" 10	7.25	" 8	7.75
" 11	6.75	" 9	8.80
" 12	6.27	" 10	7.75
" 13	6.25	" 11	8.00
" 14	5.81	" 12	8.00
" 15	6.35	" 13	7.25
" 16	6.35	" 14	7.25
" 17	6.35	" 15	7.25
" 18	6.98	" 16	7.02
" 19	6.65	" 17	7.34
" 20	6.25	" 18	6.30
" 21	6.13	" 19	5.75
" 22	6.11	" 20	5.36
" 23	5.80	" 21	5.36
" 24	5.31	" 22	5.36
" 25	5.41	" 23	5.40
" 26	5.77	" 24	6.25
" 27	6.01	" 25	6.20
" 28	6.35	" 26	5.82
" 29	7.27	" 27	5.25
" 30	6.35	" 28	5.25
May 1	6.00	" 29	5.25
" 2	5.36	" 30	4.85
" 3	5.18	May 1	4.91
" 4	5.00	" 2	4.02
" 5	5.01	" 3	3.75
" 6	4.61	" 4	3.50
" 7	4.00	" 5	3.50
" 8	3.97½	" 6	3.50
" 9	3.85	" 7	3.15
		" 8	3.07½
		" 9	2.95
		" 10	3.15

**More Benefits To Members**

George Forstall, Secretary of Local No. 312 in making public these figures also said, "The price the union negotiated for processed strawberries was 19½ cents a pound this year, and it's the highest figure growers received anywhere in the United States for

berries going into the cold pack and canning operation."

Forstall continued by saying, "One-half a cent of this 19½ cents per pound is to be pro-rated to growers in the form of shares in the Credit Union set up by members of the Union. The shares may be left in the Credit Union.

**Union Wins**

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ican Nationals were permitted to continue work as strike breakers. Several difficulties arose on the Maggio Ranch after the Union members went to work. The ranch foreman, accustomed to driving Mexican wetbacks and nationals in the fields like cattle, could not treat Union members that way. A field foreman who threatened to shoot a Union member working for Maggio was disarmed by the County Sheriff. Attempts to hire more workers than were actually needed were resisted. For several weeks about 100 Union men made good money picking melons.

The Union rate of pay was accepted by all employers in the area and the crop was harvested. Before the end of the season, both Americans and Mexicans benefitted by the Union program and the Labor Department's action.

**State Cracks Down On Truck Operators**

In an effort to clean up the Imperial Valley, Union Representative Ernesto Galarza, called upon Governor Warren of California to stop the use of unsafe trucks transporting workers to and from the fields. A. C. Blackmon, Chief of the California Division of Industrial Safety, sent in a force of patrolmen who immediately began cracking down on operators of unsafe transportation. Implying that the safe transportation for farm labor drive beginning in the Imperial would be followed up elsewhere in the state, the Division of Industrial Safety was quoted as saying that practically all trucks and other facilities used for labor transportation were in violation of safety standards set by state law.

**N. Y. Dairy Union Making Progress**

On June 20, President H. L. Mitchell and Secretary Dorothy Dowe attended a meeting of the Herkimer County Milk Producers Union which was held in Carpenters Hall in the town of Herkimer, N. Y. The Union Local composed of about 200 members, has a contract with the Little Falls Dairy Company, which pays members a higher price for their products than the minimum price set by the Milk Control Boards in the state. W. W. Bronson is President of the dairy farmers local while his wife, Geraldine, is the competent recording secretary. Duane Maniacek is the Treasurer.



## New Law Exempts Farm Labor From Wage Controls

A little noticed amendment to the Defense Production Act which became law on June 30th, removed farm labor from wage controls. This law does away with the government freeze on all farm wages. Regulation II, which prevented farm wages from being raised above 95 c. an hour or 15 per cent higher than the 1950 base rate is set aside in the new Defense Production Act. From now on wages on the farm can be raised to any figure without approval by the Wage Stabilization Board.

The exemption of farm wages does not apply to wages paid in food processing which are still under government regulation and may be increased only by approval of the Wage Board set up by the government for this purpose.

### No More Wage Hearings

Only a few wage determinations setting farm rates were held and with few exceptions they were in California. A ceiling was imposed on tomato picking in northern Calif., which actually rolled back the wages of farm workers from the levels won by the strike action in 1950. The ceiling on tomato picking resulted in experienced workers leaving the fields to get jobs elsewhere. Much of the valuable crop was lost when the tomato growers employed Mexican Nationals and wetbacks to harvest the crop.

Another hearing held on cotton picking wages in the San Joaquin Valley at which the Union took the lead, resulted in a ceiling of \$4 per 100 lbs. in 1951. The rates promptly went to \$4 and many farmers paid above the officially approved ceiling. This experience led the regional wage board on the West Coast to petition the national board to abolish the farm wage freeze.

### Union Convention Called for End of Wage Freeze

The 17th Convention of the Union meeting in Memphis called upon the government to either abolish wage controls in agriculture or to give full representation to farm workers' organization on such boards of control. Thus the Union was first to demand abolition of wage controls on the farm.

Most of the farmers objected to any sort of regulation of farm wages. The only farmers interested in controlling wages were the largest growers in California who sought to use the Wage Stabilization program to stop the Union.

## Union to Represent Sugar Cane Workers At La. Wage Hearing

For the first time in history the sugar cane field workers of Louisiana will have a spokesman at the annual wage hearing conducted by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. The government hearing to decide minimum wages for the sugar cane field workers in the 1953 season will be held in Thibodaux, La., on July 31st.

Hank Hasiwar, Vice President of the National Agricultural Workers Union A. F. of L., has announced that 10,000 wage ballots were distributed among the cane field workers during the past two months. Each individual worker was asked to state the wage he or she felt was fair and reasonable for field work in the coming year.

Hasiwar said he would take a committee to Thibodaux to present to the government officials the demands of the workers on the sugar cane plantations. In addition to the committee of field worker representatives, several officers and members of the Local Union 312, Fruit and Vegetable Producers, are expected to attend the sugar cane wage hearings. This will demonstrate the support of 3,400 small farmers of the union for fair wages to field workers.

It is also reported that a number of small cane producers who are dissatisfied with the way the big plantations and refinery operators run the sugar program, are now organizing into the union and may join forces with the workers to force the big operators to disgorge some of the profits they make in the form of better prices to the small growers, as well as better rates for the workers.

### HOW HE KNEW

A man fell into a coma, and it was several days before he awoke. Later he spoke of his experience to a party of friends.

"Oh, yes," the young man said in reply to a question. "I knew all the time what was going on, and I also knew that I wasn't dead, because my feet were cold and I was hungry."

"I see," said one of his friends, thoughtfully, "but how did that make you think you were, still alive?"

"Well," answered the man, "I knew that if I were in Heaven I wouldn't be hungry, and that if I were anywhere else my feet wouldn't be cold."

## Pennsylvania Dairy Farmer Local Changes Officers

New officers have been elected by the members of Milk Producers and Handlers Local 292, National Agricultural Workers Union A. F. of L. of Butler County, Pennsylvania. Joseph Logut was chosen President and Dale Fleming, Secretary-Treasurer. The Union Local which was organized in July 1950, sponsored the organization of a Union Co-operative Milk Plant and has 188 members in good standing as of its June report.

## Members Go to Jobs In New Jersey

Early in August a number of Union members from the mid-South will be leaving their homes for New Jersey. They will work during the tomato harvest season for the H. J. Heinz Company at Salem. Arthur C. Churchill and George Stith will be in charge of arranging the transportation for the union members. Busses will leave the union office at 583 Beale Ave., Memphis, Tenn., on days set for the labor shipments to take place. Both men and women workers will be needed. The company provides good housing for the workers and meals are taken in the cafeteria at the plant. Jobs will end in October. The workers will return home in time to start cotton picking when the peak of the season arrives.

Since 1942 the union has assisted its members in getting employment when there is no work to be done at home. Often during the past 10 years as many as 2,000 workers went out to work during the off-seasons on the farms. Due to installation of new machinery and because foreign workers have been employed in some plants, this number has been greatly reduced. However, the H. J. Heinz Company plant in Salem, N. J., has found through the years that the best and most efficient seasonal workers are those the union sends to New Jersey.

### LOST

An easterner was being driven by a rancher over a blistering and almost barren stretch of West Texas when a gaudy bird, new to him, scurried in front of them. The easterner asked what it was. "That is a bird of paradise," said the rancher.

The stranger rode on in silence for a time then said, "Pretty long way from home isn't he?"

## Farm Union Offers to Pay to Clean Up Jail To House Its Members

An unusual offer was made on June 26th by the Executive Board of Fruit and Vegetable Producers Union Local 312, an affiliate of the AFL National Agricultural Workers Union. The Union offered to make a grant of \$100 to the town of Ponchatoula, La., to be used to clean up its Jail.

George Forstall, Local Union Secretary, who announced the offer of the gift to the city fathers of Ponchatoula, said the Executive Board acted after complaints had been made by union pickets that the jail was filthy and infested with bed bugs. Several union members were locked up overnight for peaceful picketing in a recent farm strike near Ponchatoula. Forstall said, "The members didn't object to going to jail for union activity but they didn't like it when the bed bugs kept them awake all night." The only condition laid down by the Union in making the \$100 grant for cleaning up the jail was that it be matched by an equal amount contributed by one or more public spirited merchants of the town.

## Wall Street Counts Us Out

Only one person out of twenty five in the United States owns stock in the nation's corporations, says a report made by the Brookings Institute. Most of the shareholders are revealed to be in the class earning \$10,000 per year or more. There are 6½ million shareholders owning one or more shares of stock in the many corporations that go to make up what is known as Wall Street. What the Brookings Institute does not reveal is who controls the shareholders stock when it comes to voting on policies the corporations follow. Anyway, none of the members of the National Agricultural Workers Union are included in the 6½ million that owns stocks in the corporations. The only kind of stock we know anything about isn't listed on the Wall Street Exchange

### "AIN'T IT THE TRUTH"

When the white men discovered this country, the Indians were running it. There were no taxes. There was no debt. The women did all the work and the white men thought they could improve on a system like that.



## Notice To Readers

The name of the Union has been changed to National Agricultural Workers Union A. F. of L. With this issue the Union's paper for 6 years called "Farm Labor News" is changed to that of "The Agricultural Unionist". The "Agricultural Unionist" will be issued 4 times a year from now on. It is printed on better paper. We plan to have more pages with more complete articles of a general nature of interest to all who work in agriculture. We will welcome articles and letters from members of the Union and from others—on timely subjects. Every quarter we want to have a review of news from all local unions. We are going to ask the officers of each local to select a reporter who will send in all news from his local union.

We want each member of the Union to get his copy of the paper.

A bundle will be sent to the Local Union Secretary for distribution to members.

The subscriptions of individuals who are not members but who have ordered the "Farm Labor News" will receive the "Agricultural Unionist".

Other weekly and monthly newspapers, union journals, etc., that exchange papers with us are asked to note the change in name and frequency of issue, and to correct their mailing list.

## THE AGRICULTURAL UNIONIST

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## 550 Farm Families Now Own Homes Due to Union

At the end of this year, 550 Farm Labor Families will own their own homes as a result of work done by the Union. They live in what is known as Delmo Labor Homes located in the Bootheel of Southeast Missouri, housing 200 Negro and 350 white families, most of whom are employed on nearby cotton plantations.

Delmo Labor Homes had its origin in 1939 when thousands of sharecroppers and tenant farmers were evicted from the cotton plantations of Missouri in a change over from a share basis to that of wage labor. The Union (then the Southern Tenant Farmers Union) gave leadership to a spontaneous movement known as the "Highway Sit Down Strike," so called because the exsharecroppers moved their families and possessions out onto the public highway in early January of that year in protest against conditions brought about by the greed of the cotton planters. The sitdown received nation wide attention. After a few days the colonies of dispossessed farm families were forcibly removed from public view by the State and local police forces. Families and their possessions were collected by police, sent in trucks to the back country roads and dumped out of sight. Union organizers moved in, located families, and gave food and clothing to the men, women and children. Money, food and clothes were contributed by Union members and their friends from all over the country. The Union officers on their errands of mercy were often stopped by plantation thugs holding deputy sheriff's commissions and prevented from giving help to the needy people. That band of ghouls known as the communist party, tried to move in to exploit the poverty of the dispossessed sharecroppers. They succeeded in getting to one isolated group and persuaded the few families to move to a communist haven located many miles away in the foothills of the Ozark mountains. The communists then claimed they had saved the sharecroppers. The Union had to fight planters, police and communists, all seeking to harm the dispossessed sharecroppers one way or the other. Nevertheless, the Union finally got the Government to provide relief and temporary housing for the homeless and hungry. Then a delegation made up of the victims of plantation greed, was sent to Washington by the Union and there proposed that the Farm Sec-

urity Administration build homes for the homeless workers, consisting of an individual house and small tract of land located in groups near centers where work could be found on the plantations and in the towns. The program was accepted and 600 homes were built. There were nine small communities, six of them for white families and three for colored families. The homes were completed by early 1941 and the exsharecroppers moved into the small but nice new homes.

The nine communities composing the Delmo Labor Homes project became centers for all sorts of activity, including union organization. The plantation owners did not like it. They often refused to hire workers known to be living in the government owned houses. In late 1942, the Union again found an answer which was to help the people get jobs in other areas, where there were labor shortages. Hundreds of workers from Southeast Missouri were recruited by the Union, transported to jobs in the West and East and then returned home when the harvest was over.

During war time, the cotton planters saw a chance to get rid of Delmo Labor Homes. They persuaded Congress to pass a law providing that the homes of these workers should be sold to the highest bidder. The Union fought the bill in Congress and tried to get it vetoed by the President of the United States, but without success. A delegation of workers from Southeast Missouri was again sent to Washington to appeal to authorities to save these homes for the people who lived in them. But the Union had no money or financial backing to make an acceptable bid on the homes. Rev. Dave Burgess, a young Congregational minister, assigned by his Church to work with the Union and its members, started working out a program to enable the people to buy their homes. Dave Burgess left no stone unturned. Finally, enough money was raised to make a down payment on the entire project with each family putting up \$100. An organization known as the Delmo Housing Corp. was set up by people considered by the government to be financially responsible, a group of liberals in St. Louis. The Corporation worked out a plan whereby the families began paying off the mortgages on a monthly basis just like rent. The "financially responsible" backers of the

Delmo Housing Corporation, some of whom had little use for any Union, decided it was best that the Farm Labor Union be left out of any formal connection with the project. One of the largest cotton planters in Southeast Missouri was named as a member of the Board of Directors, along with a St. Louis manufacturer, and several religious and civic leaders from the same city. A real estate operator from Sikeston, Mo. was hired as the manager of the Delmo Housing Corp. The most active of the Union leaders soon left the Delmo Labor Homes and Dave Burgess was transferred elsewhere and became a labor organizer in Georgia. Then there wasn't much real worker leadership left. Only a deep and lasting desire on the part of the Delmo residents to own their own homes kept the project alive through the years. The majority of the families, by some means or another, kept making their payments as they came due. Several workers assigned and supported by various Church organizations, among them were the Churchills and the Stewards, worked hard and long at the task of unifying the people at Delmo. Here and there community projects were built, but the area-wide leadership was gone. The Delmo Corp. though directed by well meaning people, has not yet succeeded in bringing back the fighting spirit that was built originally and which fought the battle through the years and finally saved the peoples' homes at Delmo from the auction block.

## Minn., Wis. Union Locals Working on Welfare Plan

According to information received from John L. Banks, Jr. of Superior, Wis., the 1,500 union members in the Duluth-Superior area are beginning to work out a project whereby all of the union members will be covered by a Union Welfare plan. This may include substantial insurance with cash benefits to be paid farmers upon retirement from dairy farming.

### OVER-SELLING

A southern cotton picker, listening to the speech of a perspiring candidate at a country picnic, remarked:

"He sho' do recommend hisself powerful high."